

House
208 South Joachim Street
Mobile
Mobile County
Alabama

HABS No. ALA-787

HABS
ALA,
49-MOBI,
120-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ALA-787

HOUSE

Location: 208 S. Joachim Street, Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama
Geographic Location Code: 01-2100-097

Present Use: Demolished in 1969 for construction of Interstate Highway 10.

Statement of The over-all design of this fine mid-nineteenth-century
Significance: house, combining Classical Revival details with intersecting gable roofs, is unusual in Mobile.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: c. 1865-70. There is no actual documentation of the erection of this house except that it was completed in its present form by 1873, when it appeared on the Bird's Eye View of the City of Mobile. The Lewis Troost Map (c. 1840), however, indicates that a two-story frame house stood on this lot. In its present state, the house can be stylistically dated to the years following the Civil War, but the unusual plan may indicate a series of additions and rebuildings. Thus, the original c. 1840 building may have been incorporated into the present structure. If this were the case, it is likely that the north side of the house contains the older section, and the original would probably have had a typical side hall plan with rear service wing.
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The title to this property, a lot originally about twice the size of the present 50' x 100', was disputed in the early 1840's. The following chain of title was extracted from the Deed Books of the Probate Court, Mobile County.

1843 Partition Deed December 19, 1843 in Book os 10 page 424
Heirs of Eslava, DeLusser and Kennedy
to
Simmons, Smits and Martin
"Whereas an act of Congress has been passed confirming the title...of Madame DeLusser to a parcel of land... and whereas the claim conflicts with the Price claim and the William McCoy claim...and whereas the claim of DeLusser has been divided between...Eslava and the

Develle branch of M. DeLusser's heirs in equal parts, 120- with the exception of a small portion...and whereas it is important that the title shall be quieted...to the end of compromising the suits...Musson, who represents the members of the Develle branch...and M.S. Eslava, who represents the heirs of D.M. Eslava...propose as follows ...(that) the division of the lands...be made by three disinterested persons...and...they are to make the estimates of the improvements and value of the land..."

1847 Deed December 20, 1847 in Book os 13 page 203

Louis E. Musson

to

J.B. Trinchard

"...in consideration of the sum of four hundred and fifty dollars do grant...a parcel of land...together with all...tenements..."

1899 Deed July 18, 1899 in Book 89 page 571

Eleanora Brown (eventual heir of Trinchard?)

to

John J. Meyer

"...in consideration of the sum of five thousand six hundred and fifty-two dollars have granted... all that parcel of land with the improvements thereon..."

1963 Deed March 25, 1963

Anne Meyer

to

Jean Carter

B. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Lewis Trooat Map (c. 1840), City Hall, Mobile

Mobile Deed Books, Probate Court Record Division,
Mobile County

2. Secondary and published sources:

Bird's Eye View of the City of Mobile, Alabama, 1873,
Cincinnati, Ehrgotte T. Krebs, 1873.

Southern and Southwestern Surveying and Publishing Company,
City Atlas of Mobile, Alabama, from actual Surveys and
Records, Baltimore, G.M. Hopkins, 1878.

Prepared by Linda Carroll
Student Historian
August 29, 1966
and
Charles A. Herrington
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
July 21, 1972

ALA
49. Mob
120

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The complex plan, intersecting gable roofs, wide overhanging eaves, and bay window are uncommon in Mobile. The spatial planning of the interior and the fine wooden detailing on the exterior are especially noteworthy.
2. Condition of fabric: Despite the absence of a trace of paint on the exterior, the cypress siding and trim, with the exception of the rear gallery, were in good condition before demolition in 1969. The interior was in poor condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This is a two-story house which, because of the high gables, displays extremely vertical proportions. The over-all plan consists of two adjoining rectangles (parallel) and measures 38'-0" x 61'-4" (excluding bay window).
2. Foundations: The exterior foundation of the house is a continuous brick wall stuccoed and vented by voids in the brickwork. Brick piers also stuccoed are the supports for the porches, with spaces between having been filled at a later date.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The entire exterior is horizontal cypress siding with no trace of paint. The siding is shiplap, except on the front porch wall, which is smooth tongue-and-groove, in accordance with local custom. Corner boards consist of two continuous planks over 1" thick and extending unbroken the full height of the wall. One of the planks is beaded with a large-scale bead on the meeting edge, providing a finish to the butt joint. The south wall is divided into three bays by continuous vertical planks similar to the corner boards, with the middle bay carried up

as a gable. There are two windows on each floor in the center bay, with the outer bays completely solid except for a single window on the first floor in the westernmost bay. Large-scale jig-saw brackets terminate each of the vertical boards under the eaves, and similar smaller-scaled brackets are intermediate.

4. Structural system, framing: The attic was not accessible, but it is presumed that the structural framing is also cypress.
5. Porches, stoops: Concrete steps lead up to the yard on the east front from the sidewalk, and modern concrete steps lead to the one-story wooden porch, which has wide exposed ceiling boards. This porch is located within the "L" of the east wall and a gabled projecting wing. There is a flat jig-saw balustrade between square wooden pedestals, on which are square wooden posts with simple capitals. The pedestals and posts have chamfered edges and both have inset panels. On the west rear, there is a two-story wooden "L"-shaped gallery with balustrade on the second floor only. A wooden stairway is framed within the gallery. Continuous single square timbers extend through both floors to support the roof. These relatively slender posts are notched to receive the spandrel beams of the second floor and roof. The west end of the second floor has been enclosed to provide a bathroom.
6. Chimneys: There is a stuccoed brick chimney on the south wall, enclosed by the siding, and a similar one in the middle of the service wing. An octagonal terra cotta flue occurs between the main house and the service wing on the rear.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance door on the east porch is framed by simple flat trim, with the lintel piece set between the jamb pieces. The jambs are single boards, worked on the outer edges so that the upper and lower sections are wider than the middle. Cranberry Bohemian glass has been removed from the front door. The rear door from the hall to the rear gallery is four-panelled with a transom. The trim is plain and unmoulded. Other exterior doors in the service wing are similar; some appear to have originally had shutters.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows on the front porch are floor length, with flat trim similar to the front door, and have double-hung wooden sash with two-over-four lights. The bay window on the first floor of the projecting gabled wing features a large central window (double-hung wooden

sash with two-over-four lights), with rounded corners on the upper sash. The angled windows are double-hung wooden sash with one-over-two lights and also have rounded corners at the top. An ornamental cast-iron guard is set into the lower sections of each of the openings. The windows of the bay are framed by pairs of flat angled pilasters with simple mouldings for capitals. Above is a plain frieze and four sets of paired jigsaw brackets supporting the overhang of the bay roof. Above the bay is another wide opening with a double window separated by a wide mullion. The sill rests on small console brackets and there is a pediment above which lacks the horizontal cornice, since the top of the window is slightly arched. There are three diamond-shaped windows with two lights on the north wall, and the remainder of the windows are double-hung wooden sash with six-over-six lights. The framing of these windows is plain, except that the sills are bracketed throughout.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roofs are intersecting gables covered with asphalt shingles, the roof over the service wing being lower.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There are wide overhanging eaves supported on brackets, as described above.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: None

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: On the first floor, a central hall extends through the house, with an arched opening in the center. There is a double parlor on the south, and one large room, a small irregularly-shaped room, and a stairway on the north. The unusual manner in which these rooms are disposed, including the position of the stairway, probably indicates adaptation, rather than the original plan. The rear wing consists of two rooms in line. On the second floor, the stairway leads to the center of the hall. An arched opening and three risers leads up to two bedrooms and a small room between on the east side. Another large bedroom is located in the southwest corner. A door from the hallway on the west leads to the gallery and two rooms in line over those of the first floor.
2. Stairways: The interior stairway is a double flight, perpendicular to the entrance hall and at the rear. The newel and balusters are turned. There is an exterior stairway on

ALA
49-MOB
120

the rear gallery.

3. Flooring: The flooring throughout consists of wide pine boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are plastered and papered, except that some ceilings are beaded tongue-and-groove boards that have been varnished. Wallpaper in the double parlor is flocked.
5. Doorways and doors: The doors throughout are four-panelled and framed with simple cypress architrave trim.
6. Special decorative features, trim: Ceiling cornices have been removed, but traces indicate that they existed on the first floor. There is also a drawn pilaster medallion in the hall. The moulded arch between the parlors is supported by moulded brackets. A canvas wainscot on the stair wall is frescoed to simulate moulded marble panels. Wooden panels are set under the windows on the first floor.
7. Notable hardware: None remains.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: There is a fireplace in each of the large rooms, five on each floor (including the service wing). Those of the first floor had marble mantles, but these have been removed and are now at "Oakleigh", the museum headquarters of the Mobile Historic Preservation Society (ALA-47). On the second floor, there are cast-iron grates and simple wooden mantelpieces.
 - b. Lighting: Modern electric lighting has been installed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is on the west side of Joachim Street, between Monroe and Eslava Streets, facing east. It is in a neighborhood of large frame dwellings which have deteriorated since the planning for Interstate 10 began.
2. Landscaping: A narrow concrete walk leads from the sidewalk to the front of the house. On the east front is a large magnolia tree, and there is a single fir tree in the rear yard.
3. Outbuildings: There is a small wooden shed-roofed garage on the southwest corner of the property.

HOUSE

HABS No. ALA-787 (Page 7)

Prepared by Woodrow W. Wilkins
Supervising Architect
National Park Service
August 11, 1966
and
Charles A. Herrington
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
July 25, 1972

ALA
44-MOB
120

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as a cooperative project during the summer of 1966 between the Historic American Buildings Survey and various agencies, organizations, and individuals of the City of Mobile. The Historic American Buildings Survey supplied the project supervisor, Woodrow W. Wilkins, and three draughtsmen, Carl J. Rosenberg (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Michael R. Foil (Auburn University), and Lowell K. West (University of Kentucky). One draughtsman, Elbert L. Coleman (Alabama A & M), was provided by the Mobile Housing Board, which agency administers urban renewal. The services of an additional draughtsman, James Eley, specifically designated as an architectural student from Auburn University, were made possible by contributions from numerous local architects and businessmen. The Historic Mobile Preservation Society, in agreement with the History Department of Springhill College, provided a student historian, Linda Carroll. Office space was supplied by the City of Mobile through the City Planning Commission. Roy Thigpen, a local photographer, was contracted to supply the photographs. All local arrangements were made by the Mobile Historic Development Commission, Mrs. Nancy N. Holmes, President. The project was edited during the summer of 1972 by Charles A. Herrington, Architectural Historian, in a cooperative effort between the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Mobile Historic Development Commission.